

Message Text

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E. O. 11652; N/ A

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SUBJECT: UNIVERSITY TEACHERS ON STRIKE

SUMMARY: FOLLOWING SERIES OF MISUNDERSTANDINGS AND GOVERNMENT FOOT- DRAGGING, UNIVERSITY OF LAGOS TEACHERS BEGAN STRIKE APRIL 17. PRESS REPORTS SIMILAR STRIKES AT UNIVERSITY CAMPUSES IN IFE, IBADAN, AND ZARIA. NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF UNIVERSITY TEACHERS SEEMS IN ONLY TENUOUS CONTROL OF STRIKERS, BUT EASTER HOLIDAYS MAY COOL TEMPERS. STUDENTS HAVE NOT YET JOINED STRIKERS, ALTHOUGH THEY ARE SYMPATHETIC AND THEIR LEADERS MAY BE WORKING TOWARD COMMON FRONT WITH TEACHERS.

END SUMMARY.

1. FOLLOWING APPARENTLY RELUCTANT STRIKE CALL BY INDEPENDENT NIGERIAN ASSOCIATION OF UNIVERSITY TEACHERS (NAUT), UNIVERSITY OF LAGOS TEACHING STAFF HAS REFUSED REPORT FOR WORK BEGINNING MORNING APRIL 17. CAMPUS ACTIVITY APRIL 16 CONSISTED ENTIRELY OF MEETINGS OF TEACHERS, WATCHED BY POLICE, WHICH CULMINATED IN MASS RALLY IN EVENING AND OVERWHELMING DEMAND FOR STRIKE. RALLY REJECTED APRIL 15
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ANNOUNCEMENT BY NAUT PRESIDENT, PROFESSOR O. J. FAGBEMI, THAT STRIKE ORIGINALLY SCHEDULED FOR APRIL 16 WOULD BE CANCELLED AFTER COMMISSIONERS LABOR AND EDUCATION PROMISED PRESENT NAUT CASE TO FEDERAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL MEETING APRIL 18. STRIKERS ARE DEMANDING IMMEDIATE SALARY INCREASE AND RETENTION FRINGE BENEFITS THEY WERE GIVEN AS INTERIM MEASURE TO AVOID PREVIOUS STRIKES. PRESS REPORTS TEACHERS AT UNIVERSITIES IBADAN, IFE AND AHMADU BELLO ALSO STRIKING.

2. UNILAGOS CAMPUS QUIET DURING FIRST DAY OF STRIKE, WITH NAUT EXECUTIVE COUNCIL IN CONTINUOUS SESSION AND POLICE PATROLLING OUTSIDE AND JUST INSIDE CAMPUS. ANOTHER RALLY SCHEDULED EVENING APRIL 17.

3. TEACHERS' STRIKE HAS BACKGRROUND SIMILAR TO OTHER RECENT INDUSTRIAL ACTIONS. GENESIS IS IN CREATION UDOJI PUBLIC SERVICE REVIEW COMMISSION AND CONCOMMITANT WAGE FREEZE (LAGOS A-285), FOLLOWED BY NAUT DEMANDS FOR INTERIM SALARY INCREASE AND GOVERNMENT AGREEMENT TO STUDY POSSIBLE FRINGE BENEFITS IN LIEU OF SALARY INCREASE. FRINGE BENEFITS DRAWN UP BY NAUT WERE IMPLEMENTED PIECE BEAL BY THREE UNIVERSITIES UNDER TEACHERS' PRESSURE BEFORE GOVERNMENT STUDY COMPLETED. WHEN STUDY COMPLETED MARCH 31, FRINGE BENEFITS SOMEWHAT LESS THAN THOSE DEMANDED AND ALREADY IMPLEMENTED WERE EXTENDED TO ALL SIX UNIVERSITIES. CUTBACK OF BENEFITS AMONG THREE STAFFS ALREADY ENJOYING THEM SPARKED CURRENT STRIKE.

4. COMMENT: SERIES OF MISUNDERSTANDINGS AND CONTINUED SLOPPY ADMINISTRATION OF GOVERNMENT AGREEMENTS HAS RESULTED IN HIGH FEELING AMONG UNILAG TEACHERS. STUDENTS SEEM SYMPATHETIC TO TEACHERS DEMANDS BUT THERE IS AS YET NO PUBLICLY ANNOUNCED COMMON CAUSE BETWEEN STUDENTS DISSATISFIED OVER NATIONAL YOUTH SERVICE CORPS (LAGOS 2984) AND STRIKERS. NEXT FRIDAY TO MONDAY EASTER HOLIDAYS MAY ALLOW TEMPERS TO COOL, AND YET ANOTHER COMPROMISE TO BE WORKED OUT, IF SERIOUS TROUBLE BETWEEN TEACHERS AND POLICE DOES NOT ERUPT BEFORE HOLIDAYS. SINCE FAGBEMI' S NO- STRIKE COMMITMENT REJECTED AT RALLY, STRIKE IS MORE IN NATURE MOB ACTION WHICH NAUT EXECUTIVE COUNCIL TRYING TO KEEP UNDER CONTROL. PRESS AND PUBLIC DO NOT APPEAR SYMPATHETIC TO STRIKE.

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